

Mr. Speaker, this debate today has been rather unfortunate. We have heard a lot of emotions, a lot of fear, a lot of envy. What we are trying to accomplish is simply this: let us take stock in what our Nation is facing right now. We are in the midst of a war, we have a homeland security crisis, and we are in recession. We have a lot of laid-off workers and more layoffs are occurring. And we know as a historical fact that even if our economy begins to slowly recover, that unemployment is going to linger on and on and on well after that recovery takes place.

What we have been trying to do, starting in October, then in December and now, is to try and get people back to work. The things we are trying to pass in this bill are the time-tested, proven, bipartisan solutions to get businesses to stop laying off people, to hire people back, and to help those people who have lost their jobs.

It is more than just giving someone an unemployment check. It is also helping those people with their health insurance while they have lost their jobs, and, more important than just that unemployment check is to do what we can to give people a paycheck. We have got to get the engine of economic growth growing again, because we now know because of recession, we do not have the revenues we wanted to, we do not have the revenues we need to fix Medicare, to fix Social Security, to fix these issues. We have got to get Americans back to work, then the surpluses come back, then the jobs come back. That is the constructive answer we are trying to accomplish here on, yes, a bipartisan basis.

I urge Members to drop the demagoguery and to pass this bill to help us work together to get the American people back to work and help those people who have lost their jobs.

Mr. MATSUI. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time.

Mr. Speaker, we can handle this very logically and expeditiously. I think the gentleman from New York (Mr. HUGHTON) mentioned that there are three issues here: Obviously, how we deal with the New York problem; how we deal with the unemployment benefit; and how we stimulate the economy. We agree on the first two. We should just pass a bill right now that would take care of New York's problem. We could do it and send it over to the other body. They will pass it. We can actually take care of that issue. That is simple. No one is going to object to that.

Unemployment benefits. In terms of the discussion that went on today, no Member in that 1 hour of debate has said that they do not want to give unemployed benefits to the 8 million unemployed Americans. Why not just take the other body's bill and just agree to it? We could do that by unanimous consent, vote it on the suspension calendar.

We do have a difference, because the other side wants to give corporate tax

cuts; and we think that in order to deal with the economy and stimulate it, we have to create more consumer demand. There is a big difference there. Obviously, we do not agree. We should not hold New York and we should not hold the unemployed hostage. We should pass those and then let us debate. Let us see if we can come up with a bipartisan proposal on how we stimulate the economy through either tax cuts for major corporations or how we try to create more consumer demand.

I hope that we vote "no" on this motion.

Mr. PORTMAN. Mr. Speaker, I yield the balance of my time to the distinguished Speaker of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. HASTERT).

Mr. HASTERT. Mr. Speaker, to my colleagues on this side of the Chamber, and to my colleagues on this side of the Chamber, I first want to say that yesterday was an incredible day. It was an incredible debate. Reformers came to this Chamber. They changed some of the rules on how we do things, how we elect our officials. This House worked its will. That is the way it should be.

But now we need to look at other needs. We need to look at the needs of the American people. We are in recession. We are in a war. We are in a time of terrorist threat within this country, within our own Nation as well as around the world.

In October, we passed an unemployment compensation extension. In December, we passed a stimulus package. We knew that people were out of work. We knew that people were losing jobs.

What we tried to do during this time frame was to do three simple things. Number one, because every American family who had some substantive savings, wealth in 401(k)s and the stock market, to get the confidence back in the stock markets, to get the confidence back in people putting money in those securities. This bill helps do that.

We also said that we needed to be able to get some consumer confidence. When you talk about the Fortune 500 companies, they said we need people with money out there to start buying our products. This bill does it. It puts money in people's pockets right away.

Finally, there are people out there who lost their jobs. They need unemployment compensation. They need health care. It is in this bill. But they also, more than that unemployment compensation check, they would like to have a job. And so you need to concentrate that capital where companies are putting that money back into creating jobs, building buildings, buying machinery, putting money in new ideas. This bill does it.

I heard the previous speaker say, "Don't hold these people hostage. Don't hold New York hostage." We are not. We take care of New York in this bill. We are not holding the unemployed hostage. We take care of them in this bill just as we have done two times previous. But, ladies and gentle-

men, let us not hold America hostage. Let us get this legislation done. Let us give people confidence in the markets. Let us give people confidence that they are going to get a paycheck. Let us give them the confidence that they can have a job so that they can pay their house payment and their car payment.

It is time to get this job done. It is time to quit playing political games. It is time to get a stimulus package for the people of the United States. Vote for this motion.

Mr. PASTOR. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong opposition to this misguided attempt to stimulate our economy.

Today, the House of Representatives leadership is lining unemployed Americans against a wall for another St. Valentine's Day Massacre.

While pretending to pass an economic stimulus package, they are holding the unemployed hostage in hopes of passing larger tax breaks for wealthy individuals and large corporations.

The Senate has passed legislation to extend Unemployment Compensation for the 1 million people who have exhausted their unemployment benefits since September 11. Yet, the House leadership has chosen to ignore the plight of these people, and the more than 2 million workers who will exhaust their benefits over the next 6 months, and attach a misguided "economic stimulus" package to the bill that will do nothing to stimulate the economy. I call on the House leadership to consider the clean bill passed by the Senate so we can help the 8 million people in America who are looking for jobs.

According to sources, 11,000 people are exhausting their Unemployment Compensation each and every day. With Congressional District Work Period starting today, more than 120,000 Americans will have lost their benefits by the time we return to Washington on February 26. We should stop playing partisan politics with these people's lives.

But, there are other serious problems with this "stimulus package." Any more tax cuts would continue to erode the Social Security and Medicare Trust Fund by almost \$80 billion. It is time to stop threatening our elderly just to make the 15 percent of wealthiest Americans even wealthier.

Valentine's Day is a time for us to open our hearts and to give of ourselves. But this legislation will only serve to break the hearts of those unemployed Americans who need our help.

Mr. MALONEY of Connecticut. Mr. Speaker, for the third time in 4 months, the House of Representatives will consider a deeply flawed economic stimulus package.

In January 2001, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office projected that the Federal Government would end fiscal year 2002 with a \$106 billion surplus. At that time, I advocated a fiscally responsible plan of equally dividing the surplus between tax cuts, paying down our Nation's debt, and investing in important priorities like education and health care. Unfortunately, in June legislation was passed—over my strong objections—that cut taxes more than we could afford. I have long supported tax relief, but it must be in balance with what we can afford in our budget. We are now facing large, multiyear budget deficits that threaten our long-term economic security.